assess their command of language, correct accent and diction, overall personality, knowledge of current affairs and being photogenic. Newsreaders, thus empanneled, are paid a fee from Rs. 500—750 for national news and from Rs. 250—500 for regional news per bulletin. Apart from these casual newsreaders, four regular Presentation Announcers of Doordarshan in the pay scale of Rs. 2000—3500 also present news.

बिहार में दूरदर्शन प्रसारण

*197. **श्री आस मोहम्मद :** क्या सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार को पूरे बिहार को दूरदर्शन प्रसारण के अन्तर्गत लाने हेतु कोई अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त हुआ है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो अभ्यावेदन संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा स्वीकार किए गए सुझावों संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है ?

सूचना और प्रसारण मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री के० पी० सिंह देव) : (क) और (ख) हालांकि, समग्र बिहार को डी० डी० कवरेज के अंतर्गत लाने के लिए कोई अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त नहीं हुआ है तथापि, बिहार राज्य के विभिन्न स्थानों में टी० वी० ट्रांसमीटरों और स्टूडियो सुविधाएं स्थापित करने हेतु समय-समय पर विभिन्न क्षेत्रों से अभ्यावेदन प्राप्त हुए हैं।

(ग) समग्र बिहार राज्य उपग्रह ट्रांसमिशन द्वारा कवर होता है। इसकी स्थलीय तरीके द्वारा वर्तमान कवरेज क्षेत्रवार 92.3% तथा जनसंख्यावार 91.7% है। कवरेज में और वृद्धि करने की दृष्टि से, बिहार राज्य में विभिन्न शक्तियों के 23 टी० वी० ट्रांसमीटर कार्यान्वयनाधीन हैं।

MOU between NABARD and Tamil Nadu Government

*198. SHRI S. AUSTIN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development propose to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Tamil Nadu to strengthen the Co-operative Banks in the State;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the amount of financial assistance proposed to be provided by the NABARD for the purpose ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) Based on the Development Action Plans prepared by the Tamil Nadu State Land Development Bank (TNSLDB) and Tamil Nadu State Co-operative Bank (TNSCB), Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the TNSLDB has been signed, both by the Bank and the State Government with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). As regards MOU of short term structure relating to TNSCB, MOU has been signed by the Bank with NABARD and the State Government has also cleared the proposal for signing of MOU. The MOUs contain the various measures in the areas, namely, management, organisation, operations, recovery, monitoring, besides the business plan for the next five years.

(c) The MOUs envisage the financial support from the State Government to cleanse the Balance Sheets of the Banks. NABARD will sanction loan to the State Government for contribution to the share capital of co-operative banks, provide assistance for recovery machinery, provide assistance from the Co-operative Development Fund/Research & Development Fund of NABARD, etc.

Non-Official Directors of National Handloom Development Corporation

*199. SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA :
SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) what is the strength of Non-Official Directors on the Board of National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC) and the criteria for their appointment;

(b) how many Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Directors represent actual Handloom sector;

(c) whether Non-official Directors have business connections with National Handloom Development Corporation, if so, the volume of their business during the last three years; and

(d) what are the facilities provided to the Chairman, Directors and Non-Official Directors of the NHDC ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Registration of Newspapers

*200. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of applications are pending for registration of newspapers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to clear the backlog ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir, 6,668 applications were pending as on 30-11-94.

(b) Registration of newspapers/periodicals is a continuing process. In the case of applications which are complete in all respects, efforts are made for registration certificate to be issued as early as possible. Where applications are not complete, discrepancy letters are issued to applicants to rectify the discrepancies in terms of the provisions of the Press & Registration of Books Act. In all these pending cases, discrepancy letters have been issued to the publishers.

(c) However, Govt. have appointed a Special Review Group to review the provisions of the PRB Act with a view to simplify procedures and speed up process of registration.

Speed Post Services

1903. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Posts by its own lapses is unable to render timely services of speed post items ;

(b) whether Government, despite the increasing popularity of the service amongst the masses, is unable to check the growing lapses ;

(c) whether Government will take steps to ensure proper handling of the speed post items; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) to (d) The popularity of the Speed Post Service of the Department of Post can be guaged from the fact that the number of items have increased from 73,93,716 in 1993-94 to 1,09,34,725 in 1994-95 and the revenue has increased from Rs. 32,00,00,000 in 1993-94 to Rs. 50,12,78,624 in 1994-95. Speed Post delivery is handled by specially designated postmen. In fact, in major centres, apart from the normal designated post office counters, there are specialised offices handling Speed Post. However, in a widespread network occasional lapses in service occur, but remedial steps are always taken to ensure that the service remains at a peak of efficiency.

STD facility at Sonari in Assam

1904. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the Sub-divisional Headquarter town of Sonari in Assam is not connected by independent STD facility till date ;

(b) whether Government are also aware that the present temporary arrangement through the SIBSAGAR exchange is not working at all ;

(c) whether Government are contemplating to install an independent STD facility at Sonari ; and

(d) if so, by when it will be completed ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) and (b) Sonari Sub-divisional Headquarter in Sibsagar SDCA (Short Distance Charging Area) has been connected to the S.T.D. network on reliable medium through Sibsagar the Short Distance Charging Centre for Sonari and the Trunk Automatic Exchange at Jorhat as per the switching and routing plan of Department of Telecommunications.

The STD facility is working satisfactorily.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Telephones to Freedom Fighters

1905. SHRI E. BALANANDAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 420 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd August, 1994 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the local authorities in Dhanbad Telecom Circle demand a S.S. deposit from such freedom fighter applicants ; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : (a) No, Sir, there is no SS deposit as such. However, the freedom fighters are required to pay registration fee as applicable to applicants under N-OYT General category, when they register their demand under SWS category for a new telephone connection.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Telephone Complaints

1906. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of complaints received by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, exchange-wise, in each of the last twelve months ;

(b) how many of these complaints were attended the same day, how many the next day, how many the third day and so on ;

(c) the reasons for taking so much time to attend to the complaints ;

(d) whether recording of complaints has been computerised, and if not, by when it is likely to be computerised ; and

(e) whether even after lodging complaints five hundred times, the telephone was not serviced as has been brought out in the news-item appearing in 'Nav Bharat Times' dated 8th September, 1994, if so, the